

Agitation Against Dr. Daudpota

ALWAHID

9th JANUARY

Sind Governments Press Note.

The Sind Government have issued the following press note:—

Government note with regret that, of late, there has been considerable agitation in the Press against Shamsul-Ulema, Dr. U.M. Daudpota, the present D.P.I., Sind. This agitation is mainly on the following grounds:—

(a) That important changes such as (1) adopting a new system of orthography, (2) altering the pronunciations of many Sindhi words and (3) altering certain lessons and substituting others in the Sindhi Departmental Readers have been made by the D.P.I. without consulting the School Book Committee as required under the rules although that Committee is still functioning; that the changes have been made with a view to Arabicising the Sindhi language; that the D.P.I. has deceived the public by having the name of the "Text Book Revision Committee" superscribed on the cover page of the Departmental Readers although in point of fact these changes were never approved by the Committee; that no meeting of the Committee has taken place for many months; that when the public raised a hue and cry, the Director got a new board, called the Central Board of Control for Sindhi Literature, appointed consisting mostly of members who would concur with his views; that the recognised principle of appointing an equal number of Hindus and Muslims has been ignored inasmuch as there are 6 Hindus and 9 Muslims on the Board; and that the question of orthography has now been referred by him to that Board with a view to carrying his point.

(b) That with a view to Arabicise the Sindhi language, the Director got a sub-committee of the above Board appointed consisting of five members to compile a new standard dictionary although there exists a manuscript of a good lexicon called SAHIJ-KOSH.

(c) That he managed with the above Board to have declared as useless all national songs composed in Sindhi with a view to see that Sir Mahomed Iqbal's famous tarana in Urdu 'Sare jahan se accha Hindustan hamara' should be sung in Schools.

(d) That he has undermined the system of examinations by declaring passed a lady candidate at the last S.T.C. Examination because she was related to a High Government official, although she had actually failed in that examination.

As regards (a), it may be stated that under the rules, the School Book Committee is merely consultative. Its function is simply to advise on questions referred to it by the President i.e. the D.P.I., it has nothing to do with books on technical education and ordinarily meets once a quarter. The procedure, so far as the Departmental Readers are concerned,

has been that, if any new lessons are to be substituted for the old ones, they are to be approved by the Committee. The Committee is never consulted about changes in orthography. This procedure has been followed and no changes have been made in the Departmental Readers without first consulting the Committee. Certain changes, however, have been made in the orthography for which it was not necessary to consult the Committee in view of the rules and previous practice. Nevertheless, with a view to satisfy the public and settling the question of orthography once for all, the matter has been referred to a sub-committee consisting of 6 members of the Central Advisory Board of Control for Sindhi Literature and 4 others under the chairmanship of Mr. I. I. Kazi, Bar-at-Law, a man known for his liberal and impartial views. The decision of the Committee is awaited. The Departmental Readers were prepared by a Special Vernacular Text Books Revision Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay which worked from October 1903 to March 1905, there being only one Sindhi member, viz. Rao Bahadur Premchand, then Principal, Training College for Men, Hyderabad, who was solely responsible for making alterations in the orthography of Sindhi words, which was fixed by such scholars as Diwan Nandiram and Diwan Udharam Thawardas. Since then there have been some changes in the Books. It appears that the superscription "the Text Book Revision Committee" on the cover page of the Departmental Readers is unintentional inasmuch as no such Committee exists now. Probably, this nomenclature has been continued with a view to distinguish them from other readers. The question of the D.P.I. having deceived the public, therefore, does not arise.

The D.P.I. is also not responsible for the non-functioning of the School Book Committee. The old Committee ceased to exist in March 1940 and since then no new committee has been appointed as Government have been considering desirability of the continuance or otherwise of the committee and the question whether the functions of the committee could appropriately be discharged, by the Central Board of Control for Sindhi Literature. No meeting of the Committee could, therefore, take place. It has now been decided to retain and continue the School Book Committee.

Similarly, the D.P.I. had nothing to do with the formation or the constitution of the Central Advisory Board of Control for Sindhi Literature which was appointed by Government.

3. The question of compiling a standard dictionary was entrusted to the Central Board for Sindhi Literature under the orders of Government. This Board is an independent body and is not under the control of D.P.I. It is not, therefore, understood how he could have influenced the decision of the Board so far as it related to the appointment of the sub-committee to compile a standard Sindhi dictionary. Moreover, the MSS of the SAHIJ-KOSH and all relevant matter will be placed before the Committee for its consideration.

4. With regard to the composition of a national song in Sindhi, it may be stated that Sir Iqbal's famous Tarana in Urdu beginning with 'Sare jahan se accha Hindustan harara'

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is non-communal and has been prescribed with a view to

maintain uniformity till a song in Sindhi is composed. Where a request has been made to sing any other song, the necessary permission has been given to sing it in addition to Sir Iqbal's song. The question which Sindhi song should be sung in schools is under the consideration of Government. As Sir Mahomed Iqbal's national song is non-sectarian in character, the question of communalism does not arise.

5. With regard to the alleged irregularities at the last S.T.C. Examination, it may be stated that no representation being made to him by certain lady candidate who had been declared to have failed, the D.P.I., caused a scrutiny of mark sheets to be made and it was found that through a clerical error the total number of marks obtained was typed as 22 instead, of 42, and that on actual marks she had passed the examination.

6. The above facts will show that the present D.P.I. has been an object of unmerited attacks in the Press which have been evidently made by certain interested persons with a view to bring the Educational Department into disrepute and thereby affect adversely the prestige of Government. Government would take this opportunity to make an appeal to the public to view the whole matter dispassionately in the light of the facts narrated above. Matters, such as these which are purely academic in nature, cannot be decided by agitation, either in press or on platform, and the only result might be to disturb the communal harmony existing at present between the two communities. As stated above, the questions at issue have already been referred to the Central Board of Control for Sindhi Literature consisting of well-known Sindhi Scholars who may be relied on to give them fair and impartial consideration. The decision arrived at by the Sub-Committee will be published in the form of a Press Note if necessary.

who claims that he is the only real interpreter of Muslim Sufi poets. We have no desire to comment upon Mr. Jethmal's knowledge of the subject.

7. Some years ago when Dr. Daudpota published the *Minhaj-ul-Ashiqin* (the Path of Lovers) which gives the spiritual interpretation of the allusions and allegories contained in the romantic tales immortalized in the *Shah jo Risalo*, Mr. Jethmal and his adherents had written several malignant articles under the nom de guerre of *Itih-ul-Amin*, criticizing Dr. Daudpota for narrowing down the spiritual interpretation of Shah's poems. So when Dr. Daudpota published the commentary of Shaikh Abdur Rahim Gihori along with the verses of Khawaja Md. Zaman, calling the attention of readers to how a Muslim Sufi interpreted the *Kalam* of another Sufi poet, Mr. Jethmal's ire was roused and he and others of his kindred wrote many articles against him, drawing strange conclusions and exciting the Hindu community. An episode in the life of Shaikh Gihori was made centre of attack, and Dr. Daudpota was represented to have desecrated the Hindu religion and to have incited the Muslims of Sind to pull down the Hindu temples. Briefly the episode is as follows. Towards the end of his life, Shaikh Gihori was seized with a strong desire to demolish a Hindu temple (Marbi Mihaldev) in northern Pat, where all sorts of obscenities were being perpetrated. Before settling off with a band of his faithful followers to fight the keepers of the Marbi, he sent a couplet of his own to Khawaja Gul Maulammad, the son of his Murshid Khawaja Md. Zaman, of which the meaning in plain English would be "I have burnt my boats and am fully determined to carry out my resolve." Although there is no mention of Hindu Jogis in this couplet, it was alleged that Dr. Daudpota had profaned the Jogis and abused the Hindu religion. Now this couplet was not the composition of Dr. Daudpota, who for aught we know is not a poet, but a mere quotation to add pungency to the narrative and yet it was foisted upon him. The very same couplet was quoted by Prof. Gurbuxani in his *Luwari-ja-Lal* some years before the publication of the *Abyat*, but it seems Mr. Jethmal was then sleeping and did not realize that Jogians were scandalized by his own kith and kin. Later on some apologists of Mr. Jethmal were heard to express that Dr. Daudpota should not have included this episode in the life sketch of Gihori, as if he could perjure his soul for this historical dishonesty by hiding an incident that culminated in the death of this saint.

8. Avowedly, Dr. Daudpota has made efforts to get the books of some Muslim authors prescribed for the University examination and to get a few deserving Muslims recommended for appointment and as examiners. If this means the destruction of Sindhi literature, the extirpation of Hindu culture, might it not with equal reason be pleaded that the wholesale appointment of Hindu examiners undermines Muslim culture? Perhaps with more reason—but that is a subject which will lead us to many ramifications and therefore not a fit one for the present discussion.

9. Yes, Dr. Daudpota's crimes have been many, but even if he had tried, he could hardly have acted in a more unwise manner than when he recommended Mr. Jethmal's appointment as a Sindhi Lecturer at the D. G. National College, and when he got him appointed as an examiner at the Matriculation. Perhaps Mr. Jethmal resents his exclusion from B.A. examination. If so, does he forget that this is due to the fact that the contents of the B.A. Sindhi paper were divulged by him prematurely to his own students? If he bears Dr. Daudpota the grudge that his books were not

prescribed for any University examination, he must remember that Dr. Daudpota was not the only member of the Board of Studies in Sindhi and that the other two Hindu members might also have been responsible for the rejection of his books. We understand, however, that Dr. Daudpota has never had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Jethmal's works, except one book relating to the stories in the *Shah-jo-Risalo* in 1923.

10. Mr. Jethmal has always proclaimed himself a passionate advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. If he is sincere, may we point out that he is following a definitely incorrect policy for the realization of that aim? Personal feelings and private motives are not the best ingredients in the criticism of any public action. Much more could be said on the subject of such feelings and motives, but it is hoped that enough has been said to eradicate any false impressions that may have been created in the public at large—and especially in the *Patana* section.